DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 470 338 SO 034 255

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TITLE	Arctic Animals of Alaska. First Grade Activity. Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World.
INSTITUTION	San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, CA.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	11p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Schools of California Online Resources for Education, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, 601 North East Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410-3093. E-mail: webmaster@score.rims.k12.ca.us; Web site: http://score.rims.k12.ca.us.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Animals; Art Education; Curriculum Enrichment; Grade 1; Interdisciplinary Approach; Language Arts; *Physical Environment; Physical Geography; Primary Education; Sciences; *Social Studies; State Standards; Student Educational Objectives; *Wildlife; Writing Exercises
IDENTIFIERS	*Alaska; California; *Natural History

ABSTRACT

The Arctic is covered with ice and snow for most of the year. Animals that live in Alaska's arctic region must be able to survive long winters and very cold temperatures. Surprisingly, many animals live in the harsh, cold climate. This first-grade activity plan helps students learn about the animals of the far north. The plan gives six steps for students to follow to fulfill the task: (1) explains the process (the student is asked to help the park rangers at Denali National Park (Alaska)); (2) sets out the four activities (learn about the geography of Alaska; read about Alaska's arctic animals; write a poem; and write a descriptive report); (3) discusses evaluation; (4) presents a question for conclusion; (5) offers reflection questions; and (6) suggests extension activities. The teacher notes provide grade level; addresses California history/social studies and language arts standards, including curriculum strands; cites learning objectives; suggests length of lesson; and offers interdisciplinary connections for language arts, geography, science, and art. Lists teacher resources and Internet resources. (BT)

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Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

Arctic Animals of Alaska

First Grade Activity
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http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/alaska/index.html

2002

SO 034 255

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Arctic Animals of Alaska

The Arctic is covered with ice and snow for most of the year. Animals that live in Alaska's Arctic region must be able to survive long winters and very cold temperatures. These animals have bodies that are designed to live in this world of ice and snow. Surprisingly, many animals live in this cold, harsh climate. Let's learn about these animals of the Far North.

The Task

Explore and experience the natural history of the Arctic region of Alaska by:

1. Locating the geographic region of Arctic Alaska.
2. Reading descriptions of several Arctic animals.
3. Researching to learn more about a specific Arctic animal.
4. Writing a poem about an Arctic animal.
5. Using a graphic organizer to take research notes.
6. Writing a research report about that Arctic animal.

The Process

You have been asked to help the park rangers at Denali National Park in Alaska. They need your help in making a guide to the many types of Alaskan animals living in the park. This guide will be included in a brochure given out to park visitors.

In this activity you will learn about many Arctic animals and how their bodies provide them with special protection from the cold of an Alaskan winter. After learning about several animals, you will choose an animal to write a report about. You will have an opportunity to share your report with a small group or with your class before turning it in to your teacher for the Denali National Park guide to Arctic animals.

Alaska is the northernmost and largest state of the United States. It is the only state that is separated from the rest of the states by another country.

To learn more about Denali National Park, take a look at some of these activities:

http://www.pbs.org/edens/denal.

Activity 1 - Learn About the Geography of Alaska

With your teacher's help, locate Alaska on a globe or large wall map.

1) Can you find the city of Anchorage, and Juneau, the state capital?
2) Locate the Arctic Ocean and the Arctic Circle.
3) Can you also find the Yukon River?
4) Mt. Denali is the tallest mountain in North America. Can you locate it?
5) What is the name of the ocean next to Alaska? Can you also name a sea and a gulf?
6) Alaska shares a border with which country? It is also very close to another land. What is the name of it?

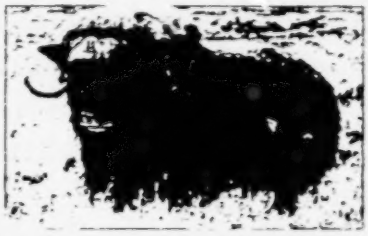
Would you like to see a map of Alaska?

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/resources/ngo/maps/atlas/

At this site, continue to access: usstates/alask

Activity 2 - Read About Alaska's Arctic Animals

The caribou, or reindeer, has two layers of fur. Except for a small area around its eyes and lips, its entire body is covered with fur. Both male and female caribou have antlers. A caribou can weigh up to 700 pounds and stands 4 to 5 feet tall. Caribou travel in large groups called a herd. The herds live in one place in the summer and move, or migrate, to another place in the winter.



The musk ox has a large body, short legs,and great big curved horns.The fur is sometimes 3 feet long. The musk ox has a thick layer of fat and a very long, shaggy coat which is waterproof. This coat protects it from cold, snow, and rain.

The polar bear has a thick white fur coat. A layer of blubber helps protect it from the cold. It is an excellent swimmer. The polar bear's white fur makes it almost invisible against the snow. As a bear sneaks up on a meal, it sometimes covers its black nose with its paw to hide itself.

A ptarmigan is a bird. In summer, its feathers are brown. They change to white as winter approaches. This white color helps the ptarmigan to blend into the snowy background and protects it from being spotted by its enemies.

The Arctic fox also changes color with the seasons. In the winter it is white and blends in with the snow. In the summer it is brown and blends in with the grasses. This is called camouflage. Changing color helps the Arctic fox to hide and also makes it easier for it to sneak up on prey.

Would you like to look at more pictures of Alaska's Arctic Animals?

http://www.alaska.net/

Continue to access Just for Kids, Kids Page, and Alaskan Animals under the Education Link.

To learn more about Polar Bears:

http://www.teelfamily.com/activities/polarbear/

Activity 3 - Write a Poem

Choose one of the Arctic animals you have just read about and write a poem about it. Some forms of poetry you may wish to use are a cinquain, acrostic or a name poem. You can also try this form, called a "Definition" poem:

What is a moose?
A very large brown animal, with four long legs,
And antlers that can weigh seventy pounds,
They like to eat water plants from lakes and ponds,
A thick fur coat helps to keep it warm.
That is a moose!

Would you like to learn more about moose?

http://www3.northstar.k12.ak.us/schools/awc/moose/moosepage.html

http://www.ptialaska.net/~bundyd/moose.html

Activity 4 - Write a Descriptive Report

1. Finding Resources

Here is a list of other animals found in Arctic Alaska: shrew, weasel, snowy owl, walrus, narwhal, Arctic hare, puffin, harp seal, snow goose, loon, and lemming.

If you would like to learn about animals that live in another part of Alaska, you might like to choose from this list: moose, grizzly bear, black bear, wolf, orca, humpback whale, Dahl sheep, and raven.

See if you can find out more information about one of them using the Internet, books, and encyclopedias:

http://www.alaska.net/

2. Taking Notes

When you have selected an animal and located information about it, begin to take notes about this animal using the boxes below:

NAME OF ANIMAL	DESCRIBE THE ANIMAL (Color, Size, Shape, Appearance)
FOOD IT EATS	ENEMIES
HOME IT HAS	INTERESTING FACT

3. Writing Paragraphs to Make a Report

After taking notes, use the key words to help you write a topic sentence for each box. A topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph. Next, write six paragraphs (one for each box) including detail sentences that help to develop the main idea you have given in

the topic sentence by adding facts, examples, details, and reasons. Each paragraph should include at least three detail sentences. Finally, write a "clincher" sentence, the last sentence in the paragraph, which will sum up the main idea.

4. Drawing a Picture

Last, draw a picture of the animal in its habitat, which is the place where the animal makes its home.

5. Sharing the Report

Share your Arctic animal report and drawing with a small group or with your class.

Evaluation

When you are done with your report, ask yourself these questions to make sure your report is ready to share with your small group or class:

1. Did you put key words or phrases in each box when you were taking notes?
2. Did you write a topic sentence for each paragraph?
3. Did you remember to write a "clincher" or closing sentence for each paragraph?
4. Did you include a poem about your animal?
5. Did you include a drawing of your animal in its habitat?

Conclusion

You have learned about animals that live in Alaska's Arctic region. How do the animals use their habitat to survive (or live in) the cold and icy Arctic?

Reflection

1. What can you do to help others respect all living creatures and their natural environments?
2. Did you accept ideas from others while completing this project? How did this help you to improve your report?

Extension Activities

Some things you might want to do next are:

1. Explore the native people who live in the Arctic region of Alaska.
2. Investigate how these people depend on the animals of the Arctic.
3. Draw a map of Alaska.
4. Write a letter to the superintendent of Denali National Park:

Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve
P.O. Box 9
Denali Park, AK 99755

Notes to the Teacher

Lesson Title: Arctic Animals of Alaska

Curricular Area: Geography, Language Arts, Science

History/Social Studies Framework: Developing social skills and responsibilities, and expanding children's geographic world.

Grade Level: 1-2

Standards:

History/Social Studies, Grades 1 & 2: Students compare and contrast relative location of people, places and things.

Language Arts, Grades 1 & 2: Reading Comprehension - 2.0 - Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They draw upon a variety of comprehension strategies as needed, including generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions, and comparing information from several sources.

Writing Strategies -1.0 - Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing considers audience and purpose. They successfully use the stages of the writing process (i.e., pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing successive versions).

Written and Oral English - 1.0 - Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions that are appropriate to each grade level.

Goals/Purpose:

Students will learn about Arctic animals.
Students will locate Alaska and the Arctic Circle on a map and globe.
Students will write a poem about an Alaskan animal.
Students will write a research report about an Alaskan animal.
Students will draw a picture of an Alaskan animal.
Students will orally present a research report.

History-Social Science Goals and Curriculum Strands (excerpted from the California State History-Social Science Framework, CA Dept. of Ed., 1988)

1. Geographic Literacy:

- Develop an awareness of place
- Understand world regions

Visual and Performing Arts component for Visual Arts: (excerpted from the California State Visual and Performing Arts Framework, CA Dept. of Ed., 1996)

1. Artistic Perception: Use imaginative techniques and methods to illustrate what they see in the natural world.

2. Creative Expression: Create original artworks based on personal experiences or responses.

Length of Lesson: 1-2 weeks

Materials:

- world map, lined writing paper, plain writing paper, crayons or markers, additional pictures/posters of Arctic animals

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Language Arts - Creative writing, paragraph, note-taking, research report writing skills
Geography - Landforms, Geographic Theme - Region
Science - Animal behavior and habitats
Art - Drawing/sketching

Teacher Resources:

- Darling, Kathy. Artic Babies. Walter and Company, 1996.
- Miller, Debbie S. Disappearing Lake, Nature's Magic in Denali National Park. Walker and Company, 1997.
- History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools. 1988.
- Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools. 1996.

- de Beers, Hans. Little Polar Bear. 1987.
- Joosse, Barbara M. Mama, Do You Love Me? Chronicle Books, 1991.
- Sea World Education. K-3 Teacher's Guide to Arctic Animals. Sea World, Inc.,1995.
- Taylor, Barbara. Eyewitness Books - Arctic & Antarctic. Alfred Knopf, 1995.
- Videotape - Polar Animals, Sea World Education Dept., 1996.

Internet Resources:

Alaska http://www.state.ak.us

Sea World Education http://www.seaworld.org

Wolves http://www.wolf.org

Credits:

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Last revised Tue, Mar 12, 2002

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